



India's Struggle for Independence

Bipan Chandra , Mridula Mukherjee (Contributor) , Aditya Mukherjee (Contributor) , K.N. Panikkar (Contributor) , Sucheta Mahajan (Contributor)

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This is the first major study to examine every one of the varied strands of the epic struggle individually and collectively and present it in a new and coherent narrative and analytical framework. Basing themselves on oral and other primary sources and years of research, the authors take the reader through every step of the independence struggle from the abortive Revolt of 1857 to the final victory of 1947. More important while incorporating existing historiographical advances, the book evolves a new and lucid view of the history of the period which will endure.

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From Reader Review India's Struggle for Independence for online ebook

Santanu says

Pros:

- Well researched.
- Good coverage.
- Fluid style of writing.

Cons:

- Biased to show congress and Nehru, Gandhi in good lights. Probably a politically sponsored account of Indian freedom struggle.
- Misses out on the contemporary global events that had influenced Indo-British politics at that time.
- Cultural and social aspects are touched but mostly to support the authors biased inferences.

Read it to know one side of the coin. No one book or may be any at all will ever completely articulate the other side of the coin. But if one follows the period deeply and analytically refusing to accept the opinionated inferences presented by the authors, it will be clear that freedom came to India when colonialism was anyway ending from everywhere in the world. Congress largely and Gandhi in particular served well to their British masters and led the unsuspecting nation to compromises that only helped to delay and diffuse the freedom struggle. Even an extremely biased and opinionated book like this cannot spin it well to lead the readers to the authors point of view.

Shubhra Jain says

One of the best history books I have read so far. Indian modern history has never been so interesting for me before.

It not only state facts but also gives a justified analysis of the same. Explains action of all the important leaders very clearly and tells the reader what exactly made them do it. You actually can picture the era frame-wise with this style of writing.

This is also a great book for understanding Mahatma Gandhi and finally justifying why he is “The father of our Nation”.

A must read for all the history enthusiasts.

Abby Varghese says

A brilliant book, probably the best in it's category especially because of the approach adopted by the author. This book does not merely state bare facts but throws in a detailed analysis of various events even though it may seem bit biased to INC. I really enjoyed a portion which deeply analysed how a person who started as the 'Ambassador of Hindu Muslim Unity' ended up by demanding Pakistan which I felt worth special mention.

A must read book.

Anurag Vaishnav says

Some claim that the book is a little biased towards the moderates. But I find no merit in that argument. It is an elaborate book with detailed analysis on how and why the things unfolded the way they did.

Shishir Chaudhary says

The subject of this book might remind you of those boring history classes of secondary school. And still 5 stars! Partly because it makes reading the same things that you believe you know, interesting, more like a sweeping cinematic recreation of the eventful period of Indian history, only lacking the audio-visual element which can be extremely well substituted by your imagination facilitated by authors' amazing narration. Highly recommended for anyone interested in History and a must-read for those preparing for the Indian Civil Services' examination.

(While some may argue that it's biased towards Congress, and it could very well be for some, but then INC was indeed an extremely active and popular body during the freedom struggle, and most of the events of the struggle were directly or indirectly associated with INC.)

Sambhav Chopra says

Do you battle with questions and thoughts like what would have happened had Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhra Azad and other extremist freedom fighters survived and led the Indian independence struggle? Why was Jawahar Lal Nehru chosen as the first prime minister of free India and not Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel? Why did the 1857 mutiny fail when the native soldiers unequivocally formed the majority? Did the British actually contribute to the development of our country? These are only a few intriguing questions and topics that are timelessly and incessantly debated by people from all over the country constituting all age groups when it comes to India's independence.

A book that can quench your thirst for the answers to the above stated perplexing questions is India's struggle for Independence. The book has chronologically covered the labour for freedom, starting with the first ever organised struggle in 1857 to the realisation of independence in 1947. It will give you a perspective that you can't cultivate by mere web articles or during tea time discussions. For instance, one of the biggest eye-openers was the effort to invoke a nationalist pride throughout the country which was never fully unified under any emperor. A few leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Lokmanya Tilak, GK Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta and others devoted their whole lives to instil the sentiment of belonging to one nation i.e. India where everyone will be equal and free from the oppressive British rule. To imagine that there was no unified India before the British occupation gives us the jitters and that only justifies the 30 years spent to nurture the nationalistic self-respect which is a pre-requisite for any independence struggle.

The book also covers the rise of communism and socialism in the country and the effect of the Russian revolution of 1917 on the leftists. It illustratively explains the convergence and divergence of leaders with different ideologies and ideas for the country. It explains how leaders like GK Gokhale and Lokmanya Tilak who were close confidantes in personal life went on different paths of moderates and extremists, the roads that reconciled and diverted multiple times during the course of their lives. Another detail that is often understated is the role of an indigenous and vernacular press that kept the fire of the toiling alive even during

the dismal days that followed the calling off of the non-cooperation and civil disobedience movement among others.

The writing style of the authors is factual, logical, coherent and analytical; also the content is well-researched. The language used is moderate with jargons used wherever necessary, and at the end of the day the substance is easy to comprehend, is enlightening and engaging. It is a comprehensive coverage of what we are never taught in our history books. Though one may argue that Bipin Chandra is leant towards Congress and Gandhiji, he touches upon all aspects of one of the best independence struggles of world history. It has gone above the academic style and delved more into circumstantial understanding, but due to that, the finer details are avoided in some instances like the Quit India movement of 1942. It is good for understanding the gross picture and an ideological march of civilisation.

The truth is that this is a first of its kind attempt to unfold the struggle for Independence which offers an insight like no other. This book is an adventurous ride which opens those doors of events that you never knew even existed. Anyone with even a remote interest in history should go through this book only to come out illuminated and ever more proud of our nation

Lingaraj Sahoo says

Profound reaserch & deep noesis of the authors make this book into a must read category for the every indian nationals.

Adarsh Nargundkar says

This is the first real book on the history of Indian independence struggle that I have read so that does raise doubts about rating it - a history book - without having anything else to draw comparison from. But then I think it's good in a way as I won't be prejudiced in my review. I'll settle for giving it 4 stars.

I thought it was a great book. For a first timer like me it was a great place to start reading about India's independence struggle. It presents a complete overview of independence movement and also talks about the socio-economic backdrop against which the struggle was set and how relevant were the methods adopted. There were times when I was left wanting for more details regarding certain events, but then if the author had catered to that the book would have ended up being doubly or triply thick. And a very hard read for a rookie.

One thing going against the book would be that the whole tale is told from the perspective of Congress. You'll often feel that the author is trying to justify the congress' or Gandhi's stance just because, well, they lead the freedom movement. The author repeatedly indulges in rationalizing their decisions which, though might not be completely incorrect, does cast doubts in the readers' mind regarding author's neutrality. It is easy to say in the hindsight that all their decisions were right since they succeeded in the end. It would have been much better if the book had maintained a more neutral tone. This is why it didn't seem fair to give it 5 stars.

But otherwise this is a very good book that gives quite a clear insight into the freedom struggle. It was quite a humbling experience to read about the movement and the great leaders behind it, many of whom are rarely acknowledged today. Their lives and ideologies are elucidated with reasonable detail and often with amusing

anecdotes.

I must accept that it was also a bit embarrassing after having completed the book that I knew so less about our own history. You will come to know about the lives and ideologies of men who were absolute intellectuals. You'll realize how bold and modern the idea of a united, democratic, sovereign and secular India was at that time under the then prevailing conditions. Had it not been for the clear understanding about India's socio-economic realities and needs by the leaders of the movement and their vision for the future of the country India would have ended up being another Pakistan.

I would recommend this book for everyone who wants to know and understand Indian independence movement.

Aamil Syed says

In India, we are taught about our freedom struggle for almost 5 years as part of the high school curriculum. But the study is just a brief overview of the entire movement and does very little justice to this major event in the history of the sub-continent. It involved millions of people and had several leaders that spanned many generations. While writing textbooks for high school history, the authors tend to concentrate on a few of those leaders that came towards the end of the movement (mainly Gandhi and Nehru) and ignore the ones who laid the groundwork for the final showdown.

Even when they are mentioned, they are only paid lip-service with only a short description of their work. We just know that Justice Ranade, Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Bal Gangadhar Tilak played a crucial role in early stages of the freedom movement, but how exactly that happened is not touched upon at all!

This book by Bipan Chandra sheds light on all of these people and introduces us to many aspects of India's freedom struggle that we wouldn't come across otherwise. It is a very handy compilation of quotes, anecdotes and many, many cross references from different works on this subject. It is as detailed as it can be in 650 pages and spans the entire 200 odd years of British rule in India in just 39 chapters.

I loved how Bipan Chandra has touched upon almost every single contribution to the movement, right from the Northwest frontier to the Southern tip of India. There are also accusations about the writer being biased towards the Congress, but he specifies in detail the approach adopted by him and how it borrows from all major ideologies. The introduction is in fact just about how he (and his contributors) went about gathering the data for such a magisterial work on recent Indian history.

But despite being such a big work, it is not at all tedious. It is the quotes that make it so interesting. It is like being right there in the midst of things as they happened. And I was also really impressed by the amount of background stories that Chandra has included for each of the leaders, it made the book much more personal than the dreary historical tomes on Indian history that we read in school. The leaders have been portrayed as true heroes and their exploits have been described in a quite a legendary fashion. It was a real joy reading this book. This is not just a refresher on the Indian freedom struggle, but it is also a very refreshing experience. Go for it!

"Under the native despot the people keep and enjoy what they produce, though at times they suffer some violence on the back. Under the British Indian despot the man is at peace, there is no violence; his substance

is drained away, unseen, peaceably and subtly — he starves in peace, and peaceably perishes in peace, with law and order."

- Bipan Chandra quotes Dadabhai Naoroji

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Sugan says

The author seems more biased towards INC. Other than that the book was a masterpiece.

Ishan Nag says

The book is quit intense , It's has 39 chapters and almost all catering to distinct events . After reading i am embarrassed to admit how less i knew about our freedom struggle . It's isn't a GK book with who when what sort of details ,though much more than it . It gives you the big picture and attempts to answer the obvious whys .Its sad that some of the fundamental ideas of the book will be limited to the audience of the book , i believe school kids should be exposed to some of the ideas albeit in a simpler form

As with history many parallels can be drawn with the present , now i more than ever despise the 'smart' media channels , most of the so-called experts,commentators know nothing about anything it seems.

The book starts with Tribal uprisings and Revolt of 1857 and ends with partition of India covering almost a century though not uniformly on time scale .Some reviews on Flipkart call it Congress centric i didn't find it so

If this is how History is supposed to be then i love it . Chapters on rise of communalism is a must read for everyone

Alok says

There are not many books that discuss and debate facts and don't let the reader feel drowsy while doing that. This one surely secures a place among those. It is written in an extremely prosaic manner that gives you the sense that you are reading an interesting piece of fiction. While there are conspicuous ideological biases here and there, mostly centre-left, the writers overall do a pretty decent job keeping their objectivity intact. This book is a must read for anyone who wants to get an insight in India's freedom struggle, the leadership and the ideological dimension of the same that made this struggle one of the most celebrated ones of our time. It demolishes some of the most widespread and ill-informed myths and misunderstandings related to the same, buttressed with credible facts - the reference section of the book is 43 pages long!!

Surely, there must be another book that tells this same story from a more centre-right point of view, that will complement this book, and I will now be looking for it.

Suvendhu Patra says

Good coverage, but more than history it sounded like an apology. It doesn't consider that Indian independence coincided with the weakening of the British Empire post WW II. Hence, independence is completely concluded to be a result of struggle of Indian leaders. At times the writers tend to extrapolate and give moral evaluations in place of a facts based analysis.

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India's struggle for independence by Bipan Chandra - ?????? ??????

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Ashok Krishna says

It is said that history is written by the victors, which means that the facts are often twisted to suit the needs and to the advantage of the writer. While Bipan Chandra does nothing to twist the facts, he has managed to take a partial view of the facts, as always. This is the second book by this same set of authors that I have read and just like the first one – ‘India Since Independence’ – this book also stands as a glaring testimony to the author’s/authors’ parochial attitude towards Congress.

While I am not one of those growing majority who take special pleasure in bashing Gandhi, Nehru and innumerable Congressmen who had given their all for the freedom struggle, what I cannot accept is projecting Congress as the one and only organization that brought freedom to the country. Never!

It is really a good work by the authors. Documenting the history of the freedom struggle of our country spanning a period of almost a century is no easy task. The authors deserve appreciation for even taking up such a big task. But what is not good about the book is the way in which the history is presented.

The efforts of anyone other than Congress is puffed away as puny or not paid as much attention as it deserves. Bhagat Singh, Bismil, Azad and other such daredevil youngsters have all got tagged as ‘terrorists’. Truth it might be, for their having taken up the violent methods to attain freedom, but something is not right about the way in which he belittles the efforts of even people like Bose. To prove my point, the entire episode of INA is given only one page with the overall part of Subhas Chandra Bose being reduced to just another also-ran!

The book should be renamed as ‘Congress’s Struggle for Independence’, because that is all you will ever read in this book. The author’s having a special liking to Nehru is quite apparent from his way of writing.

I would suggest that one can go for much better books than this, if one wants to read about the struggle for Indian independence in an unbiased manner.
